

61735/P/1

LETTSON J. C.

1775

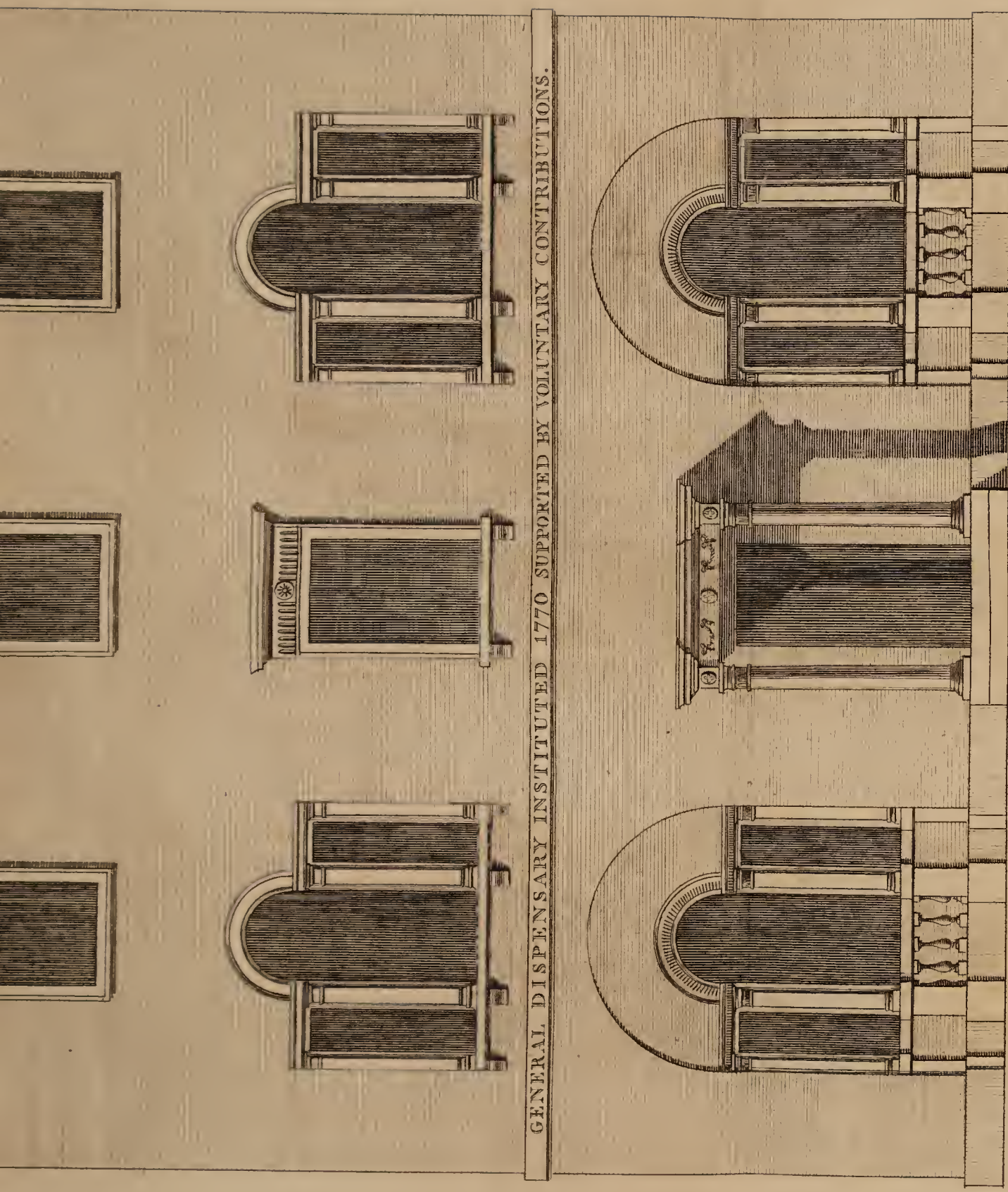


Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2018 with funding from
Wellcome Library

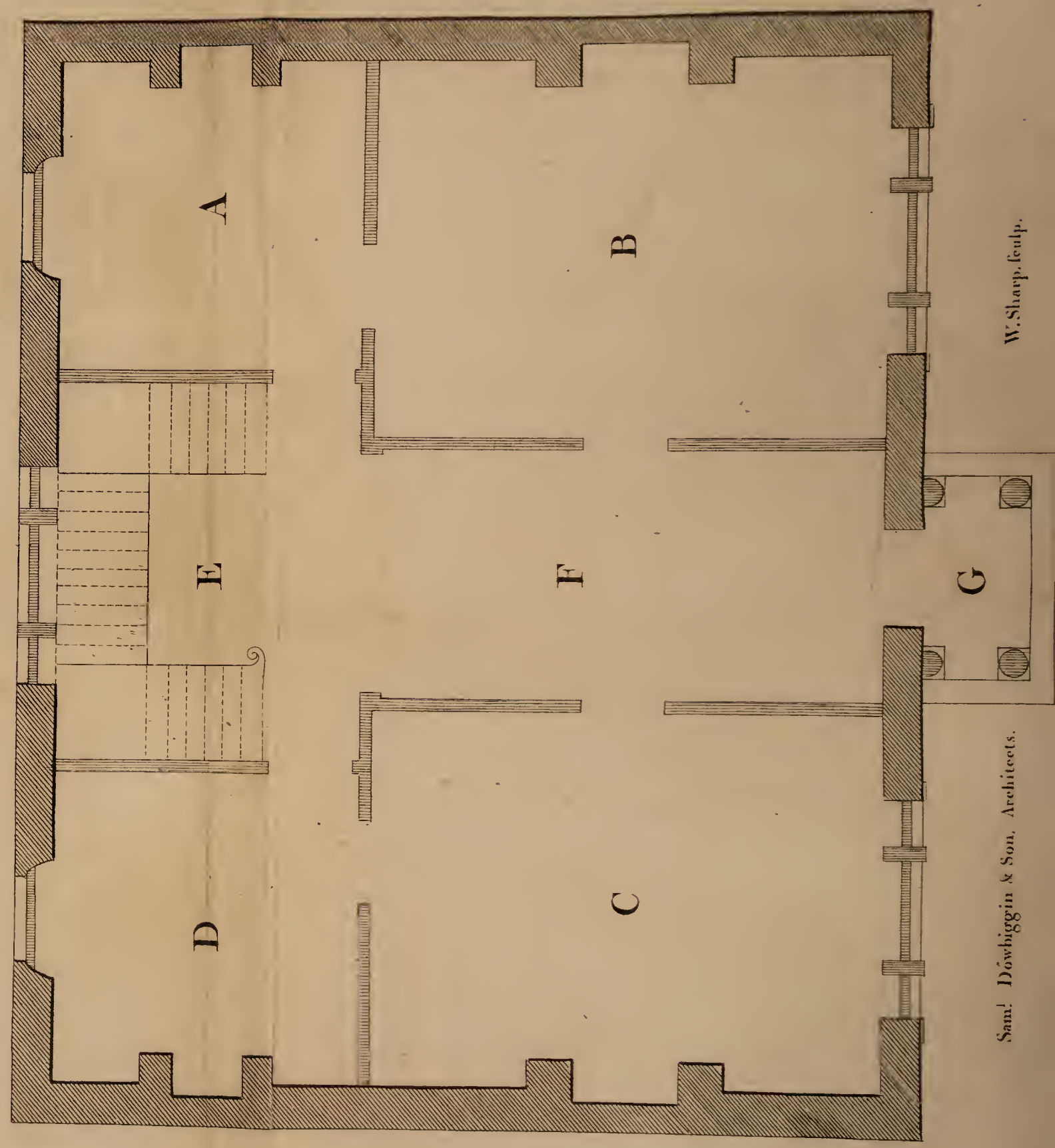
<https://archive.org/details/b30390473>

(P)

LETTSON, J.C.
C



Elevation of the New Dispensary.

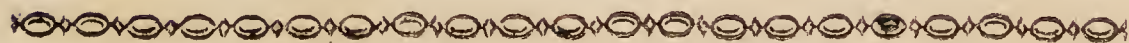


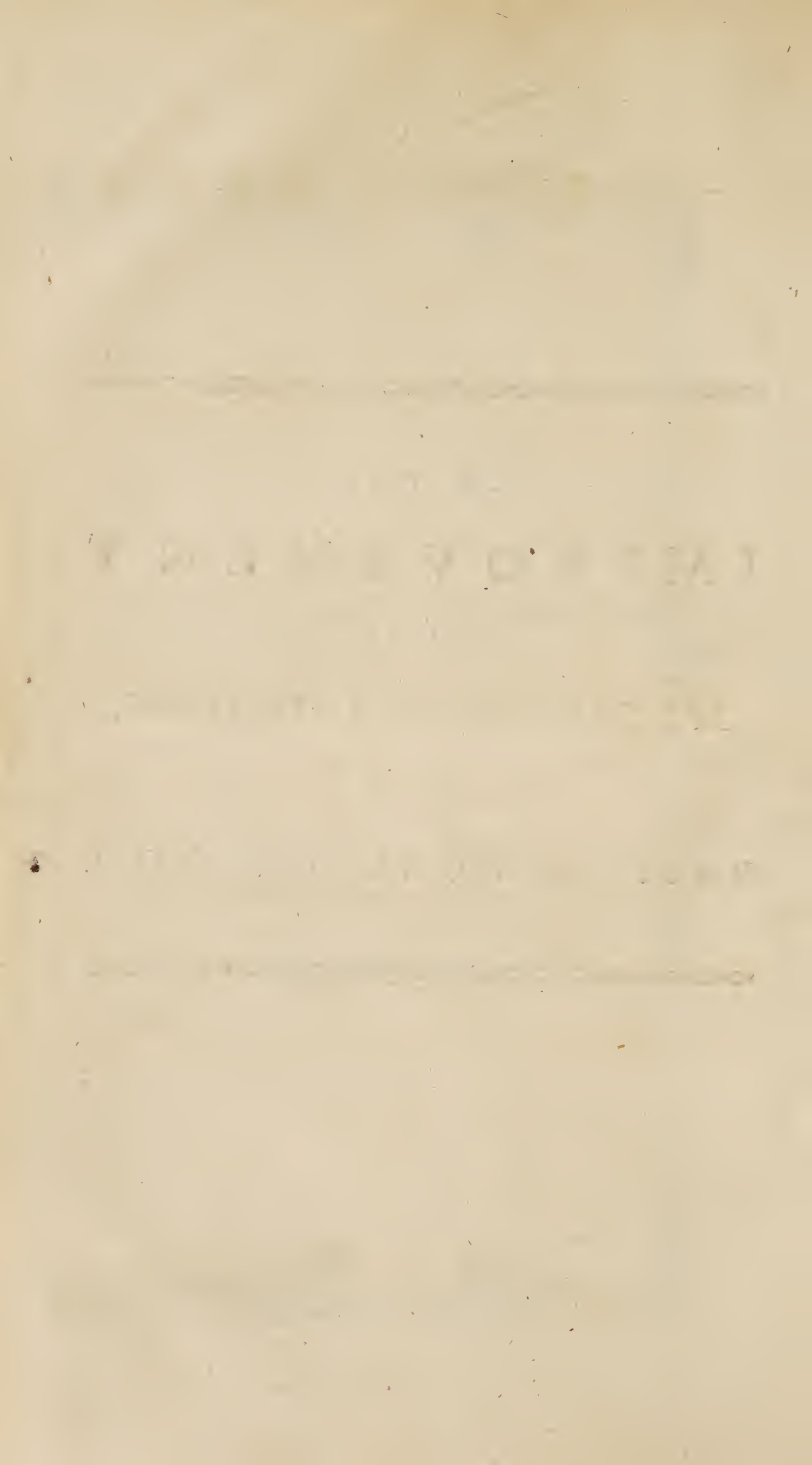
Saml. Dowbiggin & Son, Architects.

W. Sharp, Sculp.



OF THE
IMPROVEMENT
OF
MEDICINE in LONDON,
ON THE
BASIS of PUBLIC GOOD.





OF THE
IMPROVEMENT
OF
MEDICINE in LONDON,
ON THE
BASIS of PUBLIC GOOD.

“ Our doubts are traitors ;
“ And make us lose the good we oft might win,
“ By fearing to attempt.”

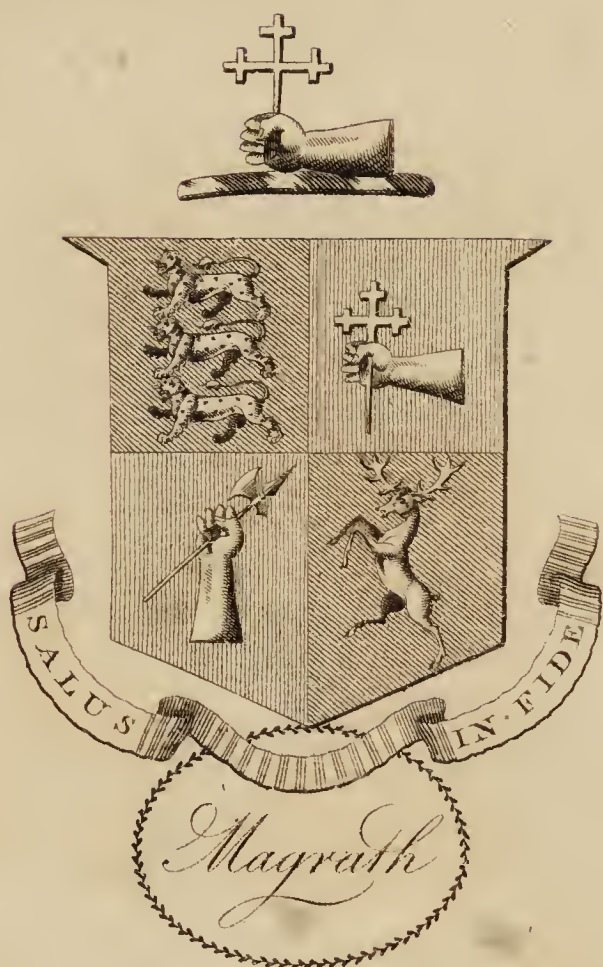
SHAKESPEARE.

L O N D O N,
PRINTED BY JAMES PHILLIPS,
FOR E. AND C. DILLY.

MDCCLXXV.

6017

WELLS VOLUME



T O

THE EARL OF DARTMOUTH, PRESIDENT;

SIR LYONEL LYDE, BART. }

AND

THOMAS NASH, ESQ. }

VICE PRESIDENTS;

JAMES JOHNSON, ESQ. TREASURER;

AND THE

GOVERNORS OF THE GENERAL DISPENSARY;

THE FOLLOWING WORK

IS RESPECTFULLY INSCRIBED,

B Y

THE AUTHOR.



C O N T E N T S.

S E C T I O N I.

PLAN and Design of the General Dispensary, - - - - - page 1

S E C T I O N II.

Progress of the Dispensary, and general
Review of it's Plan and Design, p. 10

S E C T I O N III.

Of the Finances of the Dispensary, p. 14

S E C T I O N IV.

State of the Poor in the City of London, - - - - - p. 18

S E C T I O N V.

Advantages of the Dispensary to domestic
Servants, - - - - - p. 28

SECTION

C O N T E N T S.

S E C T I O N VI.

General Dispensary as it affects the Faculty at large, - - - - - p. 33

S E C T I O N VII.

Utility of admitting Surgery, - p. 35

S E C T I O N VIII.

Consulting, or extraordinary Physicians, p. 39

S E C T I O N IX.

General Dispensary as a School of Physic, - - - - - p. 41

S E C T I O N X.

Influence of the Dispensary on the Burials in London, - - - - - p. 48

S E C T I O N XI.

Advantages of Baths, - - - - - p. 52

S E C T I O N XII.

Description of the Plan of a Building for a new General Dispensary, - - p. 55

O F



OF THE
IMPROVEMENT
OF
MEDICINE.



SECTION I.

Plan and Design of the General
Dispensary.



It was the sentiment of an ancient Roman, that “no-
“ thing brings men nearer the
“ Deity, than giving health
“ to their fellow creatures.” The dis-
position to the relief of distress that pre-
vails in this city, is a pleasing example of
the influence of civilization, benevolence,

B

and

and piety ; and the many hospitals, and other receptacles for almost every species of misery, are proofs of genuine humanity, which no preceding age ever exhibited. But objects of compassion must still prevail, as the human constitution is still liable to pain and disease ; and when pain and disease are united with poverty, they form a picture of human woe, that must naturally excite the pity, and engage the protection of those, who have been exempted from such accumulated misery.

These considerations first gave rise to the GENERAL DISPENSARY, as an auxiliary to the hospitals in this metropolis, in order to administer advice and medicines to the poor, not only at the Dispensary, but also at their own habitations ; which latter circumstance is an advantage peculiar to this plan. And, notwithstanding the many excellent charities, already subsisting for relief of the sick in and about this great metropolis ; yet, when it
is

is considered how many poor, from the nature of their circumstances and disorders, are still necessarily confined to their wretched dwellings, and perish through want of proper assistance, the utility of this institution becomes obvious.

It is presumed that this Charity will be particularly serviceable to such poor labouring families, when visited with illness, as have not the ability to assist themselves, and yet are willing to exert their utmost endeavours for support in sickness as well as in health. What pleasure must it, therefore, afford the benevolent and humane, to step in, at this critical time of distress, to their assistance ; and to be, under Providence, the happy instruments of relieving these poor objects from their various afflictions !

This Charity extends also to the diseases of children ; as it is too evident, that many of these, under a variety of slight maladies which affect their tender frames,

are, by neglect or improper treatment, totally lost to the public ; or, if they survive, are rendered useless if not burthensome members of the community. It is a melancholy truth, that near half the number born in London die under two years of age.

The subscription is fixed low, with a view to render the Charity more extensive, and give the industrious poor an easy opportunity of obtaining recommendations from their benevolent neighbours, on the earliest attack of sickness ; and thereby of receiving immediate help, before their diseases have acquired that degree of violence, which indigence and delay must necessarily occasion.

Under these peculiar advantages, the poor have a physician at their bedside on the very day they apply for relief ; instead of being banished from their habitations, when languishing with sickness, to bear the controul of alien nurses, they are con-
tinued

tinued under the fostering care of their own relations, by which love and gratitude are mutually excited, and family connexions more firmly established; and while domestic happiness is thus cultivated, the morals of so useful and numerous a class of the community are preserved unaffailed and untainted.

As such an extensive plan could not be immediately carried into execution in all the adjoining parts of this great metropolis, it was thought expedient to establish the first Dispensary in the city of London, and to settle the limits of visiting the sick at their own habitations, for the present, within the liberties thereof.

The Dispensary is situated in Aldersgate-street, where a physician attends at eleven o'clock every day (Sundays excepted) to give advice to such out-patients as shall come recommended, and to visit the home-patients at the places of their abode, as the case may require.—By out-patients are
meant

meant, such as are able to attend the Dispensary ; by home-patients, such as are not able to attend.

Though home-patients are, for the present, such only as live within the city and liberties of London ; yet, out-patients are relieved without any restriction as to place of residence.

An apothecary constantly resides at the Dispensary, to receive letters of recommendation, and compound and deliver out the medicines prescribed by the physicians.

Chirurgical*, venereal, and lunatick cases are not admitted, being the peculiar objects of other charities.

* Since this piece was sent to the press, the committee have agreed to refer the admission of surgery to the next general meeting, in consequence of a motion made for that purpose by the author.

But

But as there are medical cases, wherein surgical assistance is requisite, a surgeon attends on such occasions.

No persons are deemed objects of this charity, but such as are really necessitous.

Each patient is admitted by a printed letter of recommendation, signed by a governor ; and, when cured, returns thanks, that such governor may be informed of his right to present another object.

A general meeting is held on the second Wednesday in March, June, September, and December, in every year, at which nine governors constitute a board.

A committee of fifteen governors (three of whom are a quorum) are chosen at the general meetings in June and December, and meet at the Dispensary on the last Wednesday in every month ; which committee is open for any governors who please to attend, and who are intitled to a vote
equally

equally with the gentlemen appointed thereon.

A medical committee is chosen annually, to inspect the drugs used in the Dispensary.

Persons subscribing one guinea annually to the support of this Charity, are governors during the continuance of their subscriptions, and intitled to have one patient at a time upon the Dispensary list.

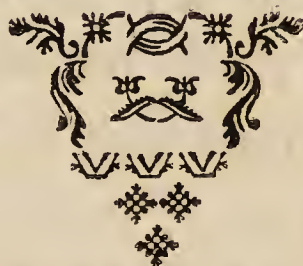
Governors subscribing two guineas annually are intitled to have two patients upon the list.

A benefaction of ten guineas constitutes a governor for life, and admits two patients at a time upon the books.

Nobility, members of parliament, and ladies, subscribing as above, may vote at all elections, by any governor appointed proxy in writing for that purpose.

Annual

Annual subscribers, desirous of being governors for life, may become such, on paying within the year a further sum, to make up not less than ten guineas in the whole.



S E C T I O N II.

Progress of the Dispensary, and
General Review of it's Plan and
Design.

AT the commencement of the Dispensary, in the year 1770, it was circumscribed to admit certain objects and diseases only; but, in it's progress, the accession of subscribers, and the consequent increase of it's income, have rendered many of those restrictions both unnecessary and improper. The governors have hitherto paid a laudable attention to every proposal of improvement; they have lately admitted small-pox patients, and domestic servants, when properly recommended, to receive the benefits of their contributions; they have elected a surgeon to attend medical cases, wherein chirurgical assistance is requisite; and as they seem thus disposed to receive every representation which tends to the convenience, interests, and general good of the poor, I
am

am induced to lay before them such proposals, as, from an attentive consideration of the finances of the Charity, and the miseries of the poor, appear most calculated to promote the great ends of the institution, Public Good.

The finances of the Dispensary, as well as the applications of the sick, have gradually increased since it's first establishment, which has induced the governors to inquire after a more spacious edifice for the purpose of conducting the business of it; the present, therefore, seems the most eligible opportunity for addressing them upon a subject now under their contemplation, and upon the methods most conducive to it's advantage and improvement; and if it should appear that opening the Dispensary to surgery in general, and to every diseased object that may apply for relief, properly recommended by a subscriber, would form the broad basis of public good, I doubt not but this address will meet with that reception and support,

which has hitherto been manifested upon other occasions.

The governors at present do not amount to 1000; but as the increase, though gradual, has been great, there is the fairest reason to conclude, that the number will soon be doubled. This, however, I shall take for granted, and proceed in my calculations upon such a supposition; but whatever number of subscribers be admitted, the proportional expences will nearly quadrate, and therefore no misconstruction can result from adopting two thousand instead of the present number.

Not two years ago the governors of the Dispensary found the house first occupied for conducting the business of it too small, they therefore took one more commodious; and this is now as much too little as the former had been two years before: hence it is hoped they will not pay too scrupulous a regard to economy, when they have found the public encouragement so much surpass their most sanguine expectations.

expectations. For this reason I have offered a plan of a Dispensary furnished with baths, and proper apartments for every useful contingency, with an estimate of all the expences that are likely to accrue: and as there are many old buildings in Alder-gate-street, and in it's vicinity, the governors may execute whatever plan they are pleased to adopt; and, with such opportunities and advantages, we may hope to see personal convenience, simple elegance, and public utility, at once united.



SECTION

S E C T I O N III.

Of the Finances of the Dispensary.

IN the year 1774 this Charity was enabled to purchase five hundred pounds in the stocks, from the savings made in that and the preceding years since it's establishment. At the period abovementioned, the gratuity to the two physicians was particularly agitated ; and many of the governors were then of opinion, that their subscriptions would barely answer the numerous applications of the sick poor, which had been of late considerably augmented in proportion to the number of subscribers, from the Charity being more generally known among the lower class of people ; but, as the labor of the physicians appeared to have been very great, it was agreed to give each one hundred pounds for their services during the last year.

In this city, where opulence is united with benevolence, it was not probable that
an

an institution so friendly to human nature, would be less regarded by the public than it had hitherto been; on the contrary, this genteel emolument given to the faculty, while it animated their application, rendered the post of physician to the Dispensary more conspicuous, and more worthy the attention of physicians of character and reputation, and daily increased the generous contributions of the public: the applications of the sick consequently increased, in proportion; and this rendered it necessary to elect a third physician the same year.

The expence which the Charity sustained by so just an attention to the faculty, seemed therefore amply compensated by the reputation and additional subscriptions procured by it; for in 1775 the governors amounted to upwards of eight hundred, and five hundred pounds more were laid out in the funds; so that the capital amounted to one thousand pounds, besides upwards of one hundred in the treasurer's hands. From

From this short view it is evident, that the General Dispensary will never fail for want of subscriptions, while the faculty are treated in such a manner as will engage gentlemen of eminence to undertake the laborious offices of physicians and surgeons to it.

The progressive accession of governors must soon augment the number as high as two thousand. The Charity will then require three physicians and as many surgeons, whose salaries, with those of the apothecary and assistants, are rated in the following estimate, which includes all other contingent expences.

	£
Three physicians and three surgeons - - - -	600
One apothecary - - - - -	80
Two assistants, 40l. each - - - - -	80
Secretary - - - - -	40
Collector - - - - -	100
Drugs, &c. - - - - -	500
House-rent - - - - -	120
Miscellaneous expences, coals, candles, &c. - -	100
	<hr/>
	1620
2000 governors, at 1l. 1s. per annum, is	2100
Interest of 1000l. at 3 per cent. per ann. is	30
	<hr/>
	£ 2130

The expences deducted from the income of the Charity will leave an annual furplus of five hundred and ten pounds, which, in a few years, must be sufficient to enable the governors to erect a new building, and to extend the benefits of their institution to more distant limits.

It may be objected, that some of the governors are subscribers for life, and therefore no future subscription can arise from them ; but to balance this deficiency, as many gentlemen at least subscribe two guineas annually. To this we may add donations by will, which will soon augment the capital of this Dispensary, and preclude every doubt of want of finances to answer it's future exigencies.

With the revenue above-mentioned, the General Dispensary will annually afford relief to about twelve thousand patients, which is nearly double to some hospitals in London, whose revenues are four times greater.

S E C T I O N IV.

State of the Poor in the City of London.

THE poor are a large, as well as useful part of the community ; they supply both the necessary and ornamental articles of life ; they have, therefore, a just claim to the protection of the rich, whose interests must direct them to encourage the industrious in their employments, to frame laws for the maintenance of their rights, and to succour them in the misfortunes to which they are unavoidably incident.

This mutual obligation between the rich and the poor, neither of whom could long subsist without the aid of the other, has in all ages formed the most natural and permanent ground of intercourse between the different degrees of the people ; the artizan always depending upon the affluent for employment, and the success of the artizan being always necessary to the ease and convenience of the affluent. In

In a country where many individuals are enriched by commerce, and where all people are possessed of civil liberty, and the unrestrained exercise of their faculties, the ornamental and necessary arts must unavoidably flourish: but, wherever many persons are employed, labor must be cheap; the earnings, therefore, of the artizan, will seldom exceed his expences; and as many of these arts depend upon circumstances changeable in their nature, multitudes must thereby be liable to suffer a temporary poverty.

However, whilst health continues, the resources which daily open to the industrious in a trading country, afford also a temporary subsistence to their families: but a long continuance of health is the lot of few. The poor, from the occasional want of employment and wholesome food, from exposure to all changes of the weather, and from various other causes, are often visited with sickness, as well as with poverty; one, indeed, is consequent

upon the other, and thereby they become the immediate objects of assistance. It is then peculiarly necessary that the hand of pity should be extended to soften the pangs of a sick bed, and to restore health and ease to the poor in affliction.

But affecting as the picture of poverty united with disease may appear, it serves to heighten our approbation of the generous and benevolent spirit, which every quarter of this city nobly exhibits ; the numerous hospitals, and other munificent receptacles for our distressed fellow-creatures, are undeniable proofs of the piety, compassion, and liberality of the opulent, which no preceding age ever afforded. Greece had her exquisite statues, and Rome her public baths and edifices ; but Christianity hath raised monuments of compassion and beneficence, unknown both to ancient Greece and Rome.

In a free country, where the manners of the people are thus softened and humanized,
and

and amongst whom mutual interests must perpetually subsist, a spontaneous gratitude will naturally arise in the poor towards their benefactors, to repay by their industry those obligations which their unavoidable sickness had incurred ; they not only meet their families with pleasure, but they are animated to follow their daily labour with redoubled cheerfulness and vigor.

I have been too intimately acquainted with the condition and manners of the poor, to want facts in support of what I advance ; if I err, it will be in not doing sufficient justice to that industry and gratitude, which they exemplify in their general deportment. Those, who form their judgment from a superficial observation of a few intoxicated objects, who are found in the most frequented places, are much mistaken with respect to the body of the laborious poor, who humbly seclude themselves in miserable courts and allies. Vice is barefaced, and boldly exposes itself in the open streets ; but modest worth steals from

from the public eye, and frequents the most solitary avenues : one vicious man, therefore, becomes more conspicuous than a thousand good men ; and our conclusions cannot be just without being formed from the whole, both with respect to the lower as well as higher stations of life.

When I consider the distresses of the indigent, I rather admire that the instances of their misconduct should be so rare : when they behold the affluence, ease, and indulgence of their superiors ; when, in spite of their utmost industry, they can with difficulty support their families ; and when sickness and disappointments supervene, it is not to be wondered at, if some expressions of discontent should break forth amongst them. But such only can properly judge of these repinings, who have seen a whole family, that once experienced better days, confined to one chamber, and one solitary bed, with sickness, with want, and a total incapacity to raise one penny ; let such try the experiment without

out murmuring, before they form a conclusion to the disadvantage of the sufferers.

During the last three years, I have attended nearly six thousand poor persons, into many of whose habitations I have entered, and been conversant with their sufferings, and their resignation under them ; in both of which they have exceeded many of their fellow-creatures, whose lot has cast them in a superior station, and whose contentment under temporary miseries, should ever be sustained by this comparative reflexion :

“ What myriads wish to be as blest as I ! ”

SHENSTONE.

Great cities are like painted sepulchres ; their public avenues, and stately edifices, seem to preclude the very possibility of distress and poverty : but if we pass beyond this superficial veil, the scene will be reversed ; the pleasing lights and shades of the picture will be blended with, and lost in a dark back-ground. A man,

A man, conversant only with the common concerns of life, would infer, upon the least reflexion, that as families in the middle station, with the utmost circumspection, cannot restrain their expences under considerable sums a year ; the laboring poor, and many ingenious artizans, who cannot possibly acquire more than forty or fifty pounds in the same time, must be liable to suffer much distress either when out of employment, or when visited with sickness. Temperance and labor render them prolific ; and to support a numerous family with all the necessaries of life, by their small earnings, is an invincible proof of the economy and industry that generally prevail among them.

Sometimes, indeed, by successive attacks of illness, they are incapable of procuring the common necessaries of life ; they have literally wanted bread, as well as cloaths ; and, instead of a bed, an old oil-cloth has been substituted, and the whole furniture of it has been a worn-out blanket,

blanket, insufficient to hide what decency requires. On such a couch have been found a husband, a wife, and two or three children, at once chained by disease, without any resources to procure a morsel of bread ; they have thus continued, till the payment for their wretched dwellings became due, when this dismal confinement has been changed for the horrible restraint of a prison, loaded with putridity and poison.

It must be owned, indeed, that such examples of extreme distress do not very often occur ; they are, however, much more frequent, than is usually imagined by those, who consider the amazing sum which the poor-rates annually amount to, and the various other provisions calculated to relieve the indigent.

Though I wish not to accuse individuals, yet truth obliges me to say, that evils exist somewhere, which require immediate reformation. I have reason to believe, that the sum annually raised, would supply all

the necessities of the national poor, were it timely and properly applied ; and this I can deduce from the conduct of a society, whose poor are comfortably supported, and their children clothed and educated, and set forward in life, with no great expence to the individuals of the community.

But from whatever causes the prevailing distresses of the poor may originate, present misery requires present aid ; whereby health, which is so necessary to their subsistence, will be sooner restored, famine and a prison avoided, the nation enriched by industry, and a hardy race of useful members preserved to the community.

The occasions of making ourselves happy by extending relief to the needy, are numberless, and would seem adapted to diffuse happiness more generally among mankind. If affluence and independence could universally prevail, the benevolent would not experience the inexpressible pleasure

pleasure of relieving the distressed ; neither could there exist that grateful satisfaction, which modest indigence ever feels from well-timed succour. In this city, however, there is no probability that these causes of mutual pleasure will ever be removed ; but, on the other hand, the affluence of some rises in proportion to the necessities of others, whose wants silently petition for their assistance.

A little good, properly directed, is often great in it's increase ; the widow's mite was not bestowed in vain : no person, therefore, should withhold his hand, from the reflection that a little can produce no benefit ; but rather be animated to do good, by observing that great effects have resulted from trifling causes ; that the smallest spring is the source of a mighty river which waters numerous provinces ; that the loftiest oak of the forest is germinated from an acorn ; and that the particle, that seems lost in the ocean, may become a pearl of inestimable value.

S E C T I O N V.

Advantages of the Dispensary to
domestic servants.

SICKNESS is the lot of humanity ; and this useful as well as numerous part of the community, who interest themselves in their different departments for the profit and pleasure of their masters, have a natural claim upon them for relief, when rendered incapable of labour by the attacks of sickness. The female sex, in particular, constitute the majority of domestic servants in this city ; they have been accustomed to the plenty of their master's table ; and frequently receive indulgencies to which the abject poor have not been used : by this, and a continual intercourse with people of decent manners, they acquire a degree of delicacy of body, as well as sensibility of mind, that renders them less able to undergo difficulties, or exposure to the wide world. Many of them who are born with tender frames,
and

and delicate constitutions, exert themselves so much in the discharge of their duty, as renders them liable to numerous ailments; and unwilling to complain for fear of incommoding a family, or incurring an expence which they themselves are unable to support, they patiently linger on, till disease becomes too deeply fixed to be eradicated. I have, indeed, been witness to the most laudable instances of humanity in masters and mistresses of families, who, as soon as they have discovered the sickness of their female servants, have evinced the tenderest care of them, engaging the advice of the family physician or apothecary, and taking upon themselves every expence that might accrue : and where servants meet with such treatment the aid of the Dispensary is not requisite. In some families peculiar circumstances may occur, and servants may be seized with certain diseases, particularly of the infectious kind, which may render it highly expedient to remove them to lodgings; but the humane interference of masters and mistresses may still
be

be conducted with no less advantage and security to servants than if they were at home. There are, however, many heads of families, whose humanity does not rise to such complete efforts of genuine compassion. The tender domestic, whose sickness is often occasioned by an anxious desire to please the family, is either left to discharge the expences of it, or turned out of the house at it's first commencement, for no other reason, but because she is sick, and may possibly die in the family. If we are made to assist and to do good to each other in the daily and common occurrences of life, how much more should the tenderest emotions of sympathy be excited, and the most effectual relief be administered, in such affecting situations? If we serve our fellow-creatures so far only as it creates us no trouble, where is the prevalence of Christianity over selfishness? The removal to strange lodgings, the ideas of anxiety thence excited, and the numerous fears which are apt, in such a perplexed state, to crowd in upon the mind of an inexperienced

perienced girl, who may have laboured for years without saving many shillings, all contribute to augment the first malady, and protract the cure.

Thus abandoned and out-cast, what a scene of woe do the first returns of health exhibit? Perhaps far from her native home, without one real friend, but surrounded with many false ones of both sexes, how unexpectedly do the misfortunes of a frail constitution, and the neglect of those who should have succoured her in distress, introduce her into a scene of life, to which, however shocking, necessity compels her to submit at first, and habit afterwards reconciles her beyond redemption.

To servants, thus dangerously situated in families, I know that the Dispensary has been an useful and noble succour. It has induced masters and mistresses to admit that relief, by which no expence is incurred ; and, for the same reason, has encouraged servants to apply early for a cure, before their disorders were too deeply rooted in the constitution. Thus

Thus not only the health but the morals of young people of both sexes have been preserved, and that tie betwixt masters and servants which humanity and justice have formed, has become firmly strengthened ; and, as I have generally observed, every kind assistance that domestics receive, is amply repaid by their fidelity, economy, and industry.



S E C T I O N VI.

General Dispensary as it affects the
Faculty at large.

WHERE there are numbers of wealthy citizens, there must always exist numbers of poor ; the elegance and ease of the former depend upon the ingenuity and labor of the latter ; and the opulent have abundantly testified their sense of this connexion, by many costly edifices for the reception and relief of the diseased poor. Though this has undoubtedly lessened the general practice of surgeons and apothecaries, it has not lessened their emoluments, as these receptacles are open only to poverty and distress ; it is, therefore, the unprofitable business only that must be deducted from the income of the faculty at large : and, indeed, we find gentlemen of the profession so sensible of this, that many of them have become benefactors to these very institutions. Hence, if hospitals do not operate against the interests of the faculty,

culty, the Dispensary cannot injure them; because the subjects of it's relief are such only as are really necessitous; and from such I am sure the faculty are too generous and independent to demand the mite of hard-earned labor.

The best plans have been abused, and, probably, individuals in easy circumstances may have assumed the appearance of necessity, and thereby partaken of that charity which was designed only for the indigent; but such instances must rarely, if ever, occur in the General Dispensary, because a committee of the governors attend daily, to prevent impositions of this kind, and to rectify every abuse.



S E C T I O N VII.

Utility of admitting Surgery.

A General Dispensary for relieving the poor at their own habitations, is but a modern institution, different from every other charity established in this kingdom ; the governors, therefore, acted with greater circumspection, respecting the indiscriminate admission of patients, during the infancy of so novel a plan. Perfection is not the production of a day ; it is experience that directs an accurate architect in raising a stupendous edifice upon a well-laid foundation ; and we have now sufficient ground to decide upon the propriety of admitting chirurgical patients as well as medical. The governors of the Westminster Dispensary, emboldened by the success of this prior establishment in the city of London, from the first ventured to administer relief to every malady to which the human frame is liable ; and the rapid progress of this institution of but the other

day, is a proof of what the elder Charity, with a considerable capital in the funds, is now able to accomplish : it shews that chirurgical cases are not more expensive than medical ; and, more than this, it evinces, that the worst operations may be conducted at the houses of the patients with ease and with success.

We have, indeed, seen this happily ascertained, by the success which hath attended several operations conducted by the surgeon to the General Dispensary, and some of them in capital cases, without one example of fatality.

There are frequent instances of patients laboring under diseases, equally demanding the care of the surgeon as well as of the physician ; and most chirurgical cases require, likewise, medical assistance : a strong plea might hence be formed, for admitting such complicated cases ; and, consequently, for admitting surgery in general.

The

The poor, whose circumstances often compel them to make use of the first means of aid which specious pretenders offer them, frequently fall victims to ignorance and quackery, and thereby for ever impair their health, to the injury of their families, and and loss of the community. The Dispensary, however, has proved a noble check to impostures in physic, and nearly extirpated medical quacks out of the precincts of the city; but it's influence has not yet been opposed to pretenders in surgery, by whom hundreds of our unhappy fellow creatures are annually sacrificed on Tower-hill and in Moorfields: persuaded I am, however, from the supplications of the poor, that these pests of society would soon be compelled to quit the city for want of bread, were chirurgical cases admitted to partake of the benefits of the Dispensary. Ignorance and impudence would then no longer, in the public walks, impose upon the unthinking multitude the cures of slight scrophulas for confirmed cancers, and of slight inflammations

inflammations of the eyes for the removal of blindness ; the maladies of the poor would then be timely checked, and effectually eradicated, by the joint efforts of medical and chirurgical experience, and the life of many an useful member would be redeemed to the community, their relations, and their friends.



S E C T I O N VIII.

Of consulting, or extraordinary
Physicians.

AS the Dispensary requires three times as much attendance as the largest hospital in London, though the smaller hospitals have double the officers to do the duty of them, it is natural to suppose, that the labor of each of the Dispensary physicians must be too great to allow them to officiate one for another; and, at the same time, their exposure to infection in visiting the poor at their own habitations, and frequently the prisoners in the computers, must render their health very precarious; hence much inconvenience must arise, for want of assistance during the indisposition of any of the physicians.

It appears necessary, therefore, to appoint consulting physicians, to attend during such exigencies; and likewise to consult with the physicians in ordinary upon
difficult

difficult and hazardous cases. They might be chosen out of those physicians in ordinary, who are disposed to retire from that laborious station ; and the post should be merely honorary, and have no salary annexed to it. The governors, I dare say, will not be under the necessity of waiting long before they will have an opportunity of shewing their approbation of former services, and, without any additional expence to the charity, thus rewarding those officers who have faithfully discharged their duty.



S E C T I O N IX.

General Dispensary as a School of
Phyfic.

NEXT to the succour and relief of the poor, the promotion of medical knowledge is of the utmost importance in a medical institution. Unfortunately for students of phyfic and surgery, and for mankind in general, no public plan has been adopted in Europe for conveying instruction in imitation of private practice; and hence it is, that young gentlemen of genius and application are so much at a loss at the commencement of their practice. In places wherein a multitude of our species are confined at one time, diseases in general put on a sameness of appearance, and have all more or less a putrid tendency; but a plan like that of the General Dispensary, where patients are visited at their own habitations, affords an opportunity for students of the healing art to observe the varieties in diseases, as they usually arise

G in

in private practice ; they will see their progress and determination more clearly, and learn to distinguish and treat, more judiciously, the symptoms they shall in future have occasion to prescribe for. Were these favourable opportunities of information farther improved, by lectures of the physicians and surgeons, adapted to the reigning diseases and circumstances of the patients, we need not hesitate to declare, that this institution might be rendered of the utmost importance to students, to the science of medicine, and to the public.

There are many young gentlemen of genius, application, and learning, whose finances may have been much impaired in acquiring only the rudiments of medicine ; and, therefore, as public good should ever be the motive of conduct with the faculty, the admission to the benefits of the Dispensary should be made as easy as possible to the students, who, besides the usual contingent expences requisite to acquire

quire medical knowledge, might not deem ten guineas per ann. too large a gratuity for the privilege not only of attending the practice of the physicians and surgeons, but likewise of being admitted, during that term, to all the lectures, and of seeing the manner of compounding medicines, and the forms used in prescription.

The physicians and surgeons might each give a public lecture, once every week, on the following subjects :

The physician on Mondays,	{ Clinical lectures on such cases as the Dispensary affords.
The physician on Tuesdays,	{ Theory and practice of medicine.
The physician on Wednesdays,	{ Materia medica, botany, and chemistry.
The surgeon on Thursdays,	{ Practical lectures on the chirurgical cases in the Dispensary.
The surgeon on Fridays, -	{ System of surgery, including operations in general.
The surgeon on Saturdays,	{ Anatomy, and chirurgical observations in general.

This plan, indeed, may not be fully executed for some time ; but though we can-

not immediately attain perfection, the nearer we approach towards it the better.

By seeing a multitude of cases in quick succession, without reflecting carefully on each, the attention of the student is often bewildered ; and the useful impressions which one case affords, may be effaced by sudden subsequent ones : it is hence of consequence to digest one case before the attention is engrossed by another ; and, to this end, the students should be allowed to visit the home-patients belonging to the Dispensary, on such days as the physicians attendance may be dispensed with ; and should draw up reports of the state of the disease and the present symptoms, as well as the indications of cure, and the remedies proper to be administered : these reports should be presented to the physicians under whom the respective cases were admitted, who should assign reasons for confirming or rejecting the opinions of their pupils, and then offer their own more mature judgment upon the subject before them.

Every

Every person of information is aware of the sanguine notions and theories which students acquire by a mere college education : it is a rational practice that must confirm some of their opinions, and rectify others ; that must let them perceive that many a disease, which theory has expelled in a breath, remains obstinate under the care of the ablest physicians.

Were such a plan adopted, and that it might easily be done I know by experience, young gentlemen, at their entrance upon the anxious and arduous task of the guardianship of life, would not be at a loss when called to the urgent relief of the sick, nor be tempted to adopt an unsteady precarious method of treatment ; but, having carefully combined a system of practical and theoretical knowledge, they would accurately investigate symptoms, and apply those remedies that nature and the disease require.

Though

Though I have mentioned medicine in a particular manner in this place, the same plan might be adopted for surgery, and similar good effects would undoubtedly result.

The faculty belonging to the Dispensary have long continued to meet together once a week, to consult upon all difficult cases, and to communicate their mutual assistance to each other : and such consultations, which tend to check the fallies of wild fancy, and bring theory to the test of experience, must prove peculiarly instructive to the pupils, who would hear the united observations of persons experienced in practice, see the inefficacy of certain remedies in certain diseases, and learn to apply others better adapted to the urgent symptoms, or peculiar constitution of the patient.

In such a process, students would find the most ample means of perfecting themselves in the treatment of human maladies;
and,

and, while the healing art advanced to maturity, the public must necessarily reap the benefit, by always meeting with accomplished guardians of health, under whose protection they might safely repose that dearest of temporal blessings.



SECTION X.

Influence of the Dispensary on the
Burials in London.

EVERY institution which contributes to the preservation of health, or the cure of disease, cannot fail to produce some diminution in the bills of mortality; and the General Dispensary, which, in the space of five years, has extended it's assistance to about twelve thousand diseased persons, must have had a considerable share in redeeming victims from the grave, especially as many of them were too abject to purchase the relief of medicine, or to procure a friend that had sufficient influence to open the lofty gates of an hospital. Many of their diseases were also too violent in their symptoms, and too rapid in their progress, to wait the slow return of the weekly day of admission; or of a tendency improper for reception into one ward, previously crowded with numbers of their diseased fellow-creatures.

It

It has been asserted, that “ a third part
 “ of all who die at Paris, die in hospitals.
 “ In the Hotel Dieu, a great hospital si-
 “ tuated in the middle of that city, we
 “ behold a horrid scene of misery ; for the
 “ beds being too few for the numbers
 “ admitted, it is common to see four, six,
 “ or even eight patients in a bed together,
 “ lying four at one end, and four at the
 “ other. Above a *fifth* of all who are re-
 “ ceived into this hospital, die ; the an-
 “ nual number admitted amounting to
 “ near twenty-two thousand.” Vid. Police
 of France, p. 83. “ In the two great hos-
 “ pitals of London, St. Thomas’s and St.
 “ Bartholomew’s, about six hundred die
 “ annually, or one in *thirteen* of all ad-
 “ mitted as in-patients.” Vid. Price on the
 Expectation of Lives, p. 216. “ In the
 “ Northampton Infirmary, *one* in *nineteen*
 “ of the in-patients (*communibus annis*)
 “ die every year ; and in that of Man-
 “ chester, which is built in an airy situa-
 “ tion, and tolerably well ventilated, *one*
 “ in *twenty-two*.” Percival’s Letter to

Aikin on hospitals. In the Dispensary, the deaths do not amount to *one* in *thirty-three*; which, considering the many thousands of sick persons annually admitted to partake of it's relief, must contribute not a little to the decrease of deaths in this metropolis; and so indeed it appears to have done by the bills of mortality, as the diminution in the burials has been nearly progressive every year since it's establishment, except the year 1772, when the small-pox almost solely constituted this difference, upwards of two thousand dying that year of this disease more than in the preceding year 1771. And it should be remarked, that small-pox patients were then not admitted to the benefits of the Dispensary*.

It is not merely by the relief which the poor have immediately received from

* It must be grateful to every benevolent person to be informed, that a Dispensary for inoculating the poor at their own habitations, is now established in London.

this institution, that this happy diminution of burials in the bills of mortality has been brought about: the useful instructions which, in every part of London, they have received from the physicians who have attended them during their illness, have greatly contributed to the preservation of lives, that might have been sacrificed to ignorance and quackery. In the space of a very few years I have observed a total revolution in the conduct of the common people respecting their diseased friends; they have learned, that most diseases are mitigated by a free admission of air, by cleanliness, and by promoting, instead of restraining, the indulgence and ease of the sick. Such instruction was new to the poor, though important to their preservation; and, when we consider how late they have acquired this information, we must lament that so many centuries have elapsed before an institution, like the General Dispensary, became the object of public attention.

S E C T I O N X I.

Advantages of Baths.

THOUGH obstructed perspiration may not now be considered as so prolific and general a source of disease as it was formerly, yet there is reason to conclude, that many diseases either originate from, or are increased by, a diminution of this natural excretion; particularly amongst the poor, whose employments, and want of cleanliness, tend to obstruct the perspirable vessels, and thereby induce the disorders dependent thereon. In such cases a warm bath must prove peculiarly serviceable, by cleansing the surface of the body, and restoring that perspiration, by the retention of which the disease had either been acquired, or considerably augmented.

The female poor more especially, by confinement in nursing, mismanagement in lyings-in, laborious exertions above
their

their strength, poor diet, and other circumstances of hardship, become enfeebled, and acquire complaints wherein the cold bath would prove more speedily beneficial than the continued use of internal remedies.

There are likewise some sudden and painful diseases, which require the immediate use of a tepid bath, and without which the usual remedies would prove ineffectual and useless ; and it is known, that the grateful warmth of water has soon procured that ease and relief, which nothing else could give.

Amidst the number of benevolent plans in this metropolis, baths, for the use of the poor, have never yet been constructed, except in a few hospitals, where they are open only to their own patients. The Dispensary, therefore, which relieves thousands, who either cannot get admitted into an hospital, or who do not choose to leave their habitations and families, must remain

main imperfect, till it is furnished both with a warm and a cold bath ; the expence of which cannot be considered as burthensome to a Charity, whose finances are daily augmenting, and whose primary design is the good of the poor.



S E C T I O N XII.

Description of the Plan for a new
General Dispensary.

THE ingenious architects who obligingly presented me with the annexed plan and elevation of a new Dispensary, have likewise generously intimated a disposition to advance money below the usual rate of interest, were it necessary, in order to complete such a structure. If this, however, should not be accepted, there is the utmost reason to suppose, that the sum requisite for carrying this plan into execution, might soon be raised by voluntary subscriptions among the opulent and generous inhabitants of this city, who have so often testified their readiness to promote the interests and welfare of the indigent and distressed.

GROUND-

GROUND-FLOOR, twelve feet high, to
consist of

	Feet	Feet
A Physicians room	13	by 11
B Physicians room for patients, in- cluding the apothecary's shop,	21	by 14
C Surgeons room for patients, in- cluding the surgery,	21	by 14
D Surgeons room	13	by 11
E Staircase	14	by 11
F Hall	10 ft.	wide
G Portico		

The BASEMENT STORY to contain

A kitchen, scullery, beer and coal cellars.

A HOT and COLD BATH.

ONE PAIR STORY, fifteen feet high, to
contain

	Feet	Feet
A committee room	40	by 21
Two rooms behind ditto, each	13	by 11

TWO PAIR STORY, ten feet high, to
contain

Four bedchambers.

F I N I S.

